

(3) *Injured party.* The person who received an injury or contracted a disease which resulted in the medical care. Such person may be an active duty or retired member, a dependent, or any other person who is eligible for medical care at DA expense. See section III, AR 40-3, and §§ 577.60 through 577.71 of this chapter.

(4) *Prospective defendant.* A person other than the injured party. An individual partnership, association, corporation, governmental body, or other legal entity, foreign or domestic, against whom the United States has a claim.

(5) *Major overseas command.* U.S. Army Forces Southern Command; the U.S. Army, Europe; Eighth U.S. Army, Korea; Western Command; and any command outside the continental limits of the contiguous states specially designated by TJAG under the provisions of AR 27-20.

(6) *Recovery judge advocate.* A JAGC officer or legal adviser responsible for assertion and collection of claims in favor of the United States for medical expenses.

§ 537.22 Basic considerations.

(a) *The right of recovery—(1) Applicable law.* The right of the United States to recover the reasonable value of medical care furnished or to be furnished an injured party is based on the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act. It accrues simultaneously with the accrual of the injured party's right to recover damages from the prospective defendant but is independent of any claim which the injured person may have against the prospective defendant. Recovery is allowed only if the injury or diseases resulted from circumstances creating a tort liability under the law of the place where the injury occurred.

(2) *Time limitation.* The Act of 18 July 1966 (28 U.S.C. 2415 *et seq.*) establishes a 3-year statute of limitation upon actions in favor of the United States for money damages founded upon a tort. The RJA will take appropriate steps within the limitation period to assure that necessary legal action is not barred by the statute.

(3) *Amount.* The Government's right of recovery is limited to amounts expended or to be expended by the United

States for medical care from other than Federal sources, and to amounts determined by the rates established by the Office of Management and Budget for medical care from Federal sources, less any amounts reimbursed by the injured party.

(b) *Certain prospective defendants—(1) U.S. Government agencies.* No claim will be asserted against any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States.

(2) *U.S. personnel.* Claims against a member of the uniformed services; or an employee of the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities; or a dependent of a service member or an employee will not be asserted unless the prospective defendant has the benefit of liability insurance coverage or was guilty of gross negligence or willful misconduct. If simple negligence occurring in the scope of a member's or employee's employment is the basis of the claim, no claim will be asserted if such claim is excluded from the coverage of the liability insurance policy involved. No claim, in the absence of specific statutory authorization, will be made directly against a member or employee, or his or her dependents for injuries sustained to himself or herself through acts of simple negligence, gross negligence, or willful misconduct.

(3) *Government contractors.* Claims, the cost or expense of which may be reimbursable by the United States under the terms of a contract, will not be asserted against a contractor without the prior approval of USARCS. Such claims will be investigated and the report thereof, which will include citation to the specific contract clauses involved and recommendations regarding assertion will be forwarded through command channels to Commander, USARCS.

(4) *Foreign persons.* Claims within the scope of §§ 537.21 through 537.24 against foreign prospective defendants will be investigated, processed, and asserted without regard to the nationality of the prospective defendant, unless such action is precluded by treaty or international agreement. Claims against an international organization, or foreign government, will be investigated and

reports thereof, together with recommendations regarding assertion and enforcement, will be forwarded through command channels to Commander, USARCS.

(5) *National Guard Members.* Claims arising from the tortious conduct of NG members will be investigated and if assertion appears appropriate, a recommendation shall be made to Commander, USARCS.

(c) *Concurrent claims under other regulations*—(1) *Section 537.1.* Claims for medical care and claims for damage to DA property arising from the same incident will be processed by the RJA in accordance with § 537.1(g). If an RJA lacks settlement authority sufficient to settle a concurrent claim under § 537.1, he may request additional authority under that section from the appropriate major overseas command SJA or area claims authority, who may delegate such additional authority in an amount not exceeding his own settlement authority. Where time is of the essence, telephonic delegations of authority are encouraged, provided they are confirmed in a writing which will be made a part of the case file.

(2) *Counterclaims.* Claims for medical care and claims against the United States which arise from the same incident will be processed by the RJA in accordance with § 537.1(g)(2). If an RJA lacks authority sufficient to settle the claim against the Government, he will coordinate his action with that claims echelon which has the necessary authority to settle the particular claim against the United States.

§ 537.23 Predemand procedures.

(a) *Relations with the injured party*—(1) *Advice.* The injured party, or, in appropriate cases, his guardian, next-of-kin, personal representative, or the executor or administrator of his estate, will be advised of the following:

(i) That under the Act of September 25, 1962 (76 Stat. 593, 42 U.S.C. 2651-3, the United States may be entitled to recover the reasonable value of medical care furnished or to be furnished him in the future from the person or persons who injured him, or who were otherwise responsible for his injury or disease; and

(ii) That if he is otherwise entitled to legal assistance under AR 27-3, he should seek guidance from a legal assistance officer regarding any claim he may have for personal injury; and

(iii) That he is required to cooperate in the prosecution of all actions of the United States against the person or persons who injured him; and

(iv) That he is required to furnish a complete statement regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident which resulted in the injury or disease; and

(v) That he is required to furnish information concerning any legal action brought or to be brought by or against the prospective defendant, or to furnish the name and address of the attorney representing him; and

(vi) That he should not execute a release or settle any claim which he may have as a result of his injury without first notifying the RJA.

(2) *Statement.* A written statement will be obtained from the injured party, or his representative, in which he acknowledges receipt of the advice in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, and provides the information required by paragraphs (a)(1) (iv) and (v) of this section. If the injured party or representative fails or refuses to furnish necessary information or cooperation, the originator of the notification of potential claims may be requested to withhold records as to medical history, diagnoses, findings, and treatment, from the injured party or anyone acting on his behalf pending compliance with the requirements in paragraph (a)(1) of this section. Mere refusal by the injured party or his representative to include the Government's claim in his claim is not sufficient basis, by itself, for this action.

(b) *Determination and assertion*—(1) *Liability.* The RJA will review all the evidence including any claims officer's report of investigation and, after assuring completeness of the file, will make a written determination as to the liability of the prospective defendant and note his reasons for such determination.

(2) *Value.* If the RJA determines that the prospective defendant is liable, he will also ascertain the reasonable value